

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Health Resources and Services Administration

Bureau of Health Professions

Division of Nursing

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

**PERSONAL AND HOME CARE AIDE STATE
TRAINING PROGRAM**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

July 8, 2010

**AFFORDABLE CARE ACT
PERSONAL AND HOME CARE AIDE STATE TRAINING (PHCAST)
PROGRAM**

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Purpose

What is the purpose of the Affordable Care Act Personal and Home Care Aide State Training (PHCAST) funding opportunity?

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) Personal and Home Care Aide State Training (PHCAST) program supports the development, evaluation, and demonstration of a competency based-uniform curriculum to train qualified personal and home care aides. The PHCAST program would ensure competent personal and home care aides with acquired skills that would be transportable to any job market in the nation, thus strengthening the direct care worker workforce.

Summary of Funding

How much funding is available?

This new program will provide funding for Federal fiscal years 2010 – 2012. Approximately \$5 million is expected to be available annually to fund **6 new awardees**. Applicants may request funding up to \$750,000 per year. Funding beyond the first year is dependent on the availability of appropriated funds in subsequent fiscal years, satisfactory grantee performance, and a decision that continued funding is in the best interest of the Federal government.

New PHCAST program applications shall be submitted for three (3) years of support. The period of support for approved and funded new projects begins September 30, 2010 and ends September 29, 2013.

How do eligible entities apply for ACA-PHCAST funds?

Funding opportunity announcement HRSA-10-288 is currently open, and will close in both Grants.gov and HRSA's Electronic Handbooks on July 19.

When will the grant be awarded?

ACA-PHCAST funds will be awarded in September 2010.

Is there any formal notification of an ACA-PHCAST award from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)?

Yes. HRSA will electronically transmit a formal notification in the form of a Notice of Grant Award (NGA) that will be provided to the ACA-PHCAST applicant organization/institution.

Eligibility

What are some examples of “Eligible State Entities”?

As stated in the guidance, eligible entities are States, including the District of Columbia, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, and American Samoa. Within the eligible entity, the Governor may designate the appropriate State agency to administer this program, such as a state health department or a state workforce investment boards, and state colleges and universities. State non-profit and for-profit agencies are eligible to apply for this grant opportunity. If applying under a governor-appointed designation, the applicant will need to provide documentation of this designation. The applicant agency must be capable of carrying out the legislative purpose of preparing individuals to become personal and home care aides.

All applicants must provide written assurance that projects will be operational with personal or home care aide students engaged in a training program during the grant period.

Are only state entities eligible to apply for this grant?

Yes. If an entity is not a state agency or is a “non-state agency”, it would not be eligible to apply for a PHCAST grant.

Can a non-profit organization apply but collaborate with the training institution that will actually offer the courses/program?

Yes, but only if – (1) The non-profit that is applying is an STATE agency; and (2) The appropriate documentation of this collaboration/partnership is provided in the application. The Secretary encourages the participating States to consult with community and vocational colleges regarding the development of curricula to implement the project with respect to activities, as applicable, which may include consideration of such colleges as partners in such implementation.

Are “for-profits” able to apply for the PHCAST Grant?

Yes, state “for-profits” agencies are eligible to apply for this grant opportunity.

Eligible Use of Funds

Are there any program-specific requirements?

Grantees receiving funding under this announcement shall agree to implement the core training competencies described under the “Proposed Core Competencies for Classroom” section of this document; and develop written materials and protocols for such core training competencies, including the development of certification tests for personal or home care aides who completed such training competencies.” (Section 2008(b)(4)(A)(ii) of the Social Security Act).

Who are eligible participants?

Project participants, or students in the demonstration program, must be **U.S. Citizens**, non-citizen nationals, or foreign nationals who possess visas permitting permanent residence in the United States. **Individuals on temporary student visas are not eligible.** Participating States would be responsible for the recruitment of a minimum number of eligible health and long-term care providers to participate in the project.

Does the PHCAST grant cover training for incumbent workers or only new workers applying for PCA jobs?

The answer is two-part: First, the applicant will need to identify who the participant pool will be for their project and then discuss this methodology in their application. The PHCAST Program grant supports the development, evaluation, and demonstration of a competency based-uniform curriculum to train qualified personal and home care aides. This includes the development of proposed continuing education competency of current personal and home care aides to ensure appropriate and high levels of skill. The program will need to have new students as a cohort to demonstrate the competency of the developed training curricula. Second, skills of current PCAs can be upgraded via continuing education as another cohort. It will be up to the applicant to again identify who the participant pool will be for this grant and how they arrived at that particular selection.

Why does the Project Director for the PHCAST grant program need to be credentialed minimally as a registered nurse (RN)?

The Project Director for the PHCAST grant program must be credentialed as a licensed registered nurse who can oversee the clinical training of these two types of nursing personnel. This is a nursing grant for nursing personnel, with a requirement that there is a nursing practice.

Will there be a “re-granting” from states to local entities to carry the PHCAST program out?

It will be up to the States awarded with PHCAST funding to distribute the funds to carry out the program as proposed in their application. If the awarded applicant’s program development and implementation included partnerships or collaborations with other entities (subcontracts) then they will be required to distribute funds in accordance with Federal and State procedures. Only one grant per state will be awarded.

Can funding be used to develop advanced competencies?

Yes. The applicant will identify the cohort of their program focus (i.e., personal or home care aides, or both), and then develop the competencies that are most appropriate for that level of direct care worker. If the advanced skills fit into your curriculum plan for that discipline, then the plan should be developed accordingly.

Could our cohort include Certified Nursing Assistants?

No. The law specifically says personal or home care aides.

Can funding be used for participant support – transportation to classes, purchase of uniforms, childcare expenses, to pay for Internet access in rural areas?

The applicant will need to provide written justification in the application of how this will improve the training of the program participants. If the applicant can successfully identify that those are barriers that would prevent participants from completing a training program, then that helps make the argument for items that could be supported under the grant. For specific questions regarding allowable costs, please contact the grant specialist for this program: Neal Meyerson – Nmeyerson@hrsa.gov.

Can applicants that partner with other agencies that do their own training in this area be eligible to partner with the State in this initiative?

The applicant is required to determine what resources (sub-contracts) will be necessary that will enable them to meet the goals of the grant project.

The guidance says that the documents have to be submitted in a specific order for the grant. How will applicants make sure that all documents are submitted correctly and in the appropriate order?

When you go into the Electronic Handbooks or EHB, it will specifically have an area for the applicants to upload the necessary information for that particular section. The applicant must be sure to upload the correct information in the particular area the EHB instructs you to do so.

Page 19 of the guidance lists the competencies. One of them has to do with the consumer needs that are specific to different population groups including older individuals, individuals with disabilities, developmental disabilities, dementia, etc. Could this be focused on a curriculum that would meet the needs across those populations and not just one population?

Yes. The guidance provided you with proposed components of training as an example and a means to make sure applicants have a comprehensive competency plan. The listed competencies in the guidance should be looked at for inclusion in your (the applicant's) competency development at a minimum.

Page 18 of the guidance has the “Required Core Application Documentation” list. Item 3(f) has registered nurse trainer, instructor qualifications. So is the expectation that the instructors will be registered nurses?

The project director has to be a registered nurse. The applicant will include in their application the personnel needed to carry out the purpose of the program and their qualifications. This includes the trainers and/or instructors that will be part of their (the applicant's) grant program. It is up to the applicant to justify why the particular persons listed have the qualifications to successfully carry out the intent of the program.

The grant speaks about curriculum development competencies and certification. Are we talking about a state regulated registry-type process similar to, for example, the certified nursing assistants being certified, or are we talking more about a vocational certificate for completion of training?

The intent of the grant program is to develop core training competencies and certification programs for personal or home care aides in an effort to advance the field. If an applicant thinks

certification for personal or home care aides would ensure the quality and competent training of these individuals and advance the field then a certification component should be included. The applicant must decide what makes sense, and should take their application/program in that direction.

Regarding the project director, does a person have to be named at the time of submission or can “to be determined” be indicated in that area?

The applicant will need to have a representative listed who will be qualified to oversee the grant project until the permanent project director is hired. The applicant will have to clearly state in some way that they will quickly recruit for a project director, if funded, that meets the qualifications set in guidance.

Are there any preferences?

No, there are no preferences or priorities for this funding opportunity.

How will ACA-PHCAST funding be delivered to grantees?

Grantees will receive ACA-PHCAST funds much in the same way schools get their current HRSA funding via the PMS; a NGA will be issued under a different grant number. For information regarding the drawdown of your awarded funds, contact your account representative at 1-877-614-5533 or <http://www.dpm.psc.gov/>. Grantees should drawdown funds based on the needs of the ARRA-PHCAST project.

Reporting

Are there any special reporting requirements for these funds?

All Bureau of Health Professions grantees are required to submit an annual two-part progress report. The first part demonstrates grantee progress on program-specific goals. The second part collects core performance measurement data to measure the Bureau's progress through its grantees in: (1) improving the distribution, diversity, and quality of the healthcare workforce, (2) improving the educational environment infrastructure, and (3) increasing students' selection of primary care education. Awarded projects will receive further information on data submission.

All BHP grantees are also required to submit a final report at the end of the grant. Grantees must submit the final report on-line in the Electronic Handbook's system at <https://grants.hrsa.gov/webexternal/home.asp>. The final report must include program-specific goals, core performance measurement data, grantee objectives and accomplishments, barriers encountered, and responses to summary questions regarding the grantee's overall experiences over the entire project period.

Are there any websites available that will be useful to me in preparing an application?

The following are useful websites:

- The Direct Care Alliance. This website provides a wealth of useful and valuable information on the direct care workforce. You may access their website at <http://directcarealliance.org/index.cfm?pageId=495>
- The United State Department of Labor. You may access their website at www.dol.gov
- The United States Department of Education. You may access their website at www.ed.gov
- The United States Bureau of Labor Statistics. You may access their website at www.bls.gov
- The Health Workforce Information Center. You may access their website at www.healthworkforceinfo.org
- The Bureau of Health Professions at HRSA. You may access our website at <http://bhpr.hrsa.gov/>
- PHI Government Affairs. You may access their website at www.PHInational.org
- The FAQs document will be made available through our website: <http://www.hrsa.gov/grants/index.html>
- To view the Institute of Medicine's Report titled, "Retooling for an Aging America: Building the Health Care Workforce" please go to <http://www.nap.edu> to download this report as well as many others for free.